

REVIEW OF THE TRANSITION OF WEAPON
SYSTEMS INTO PRODUCTION

In October 1981, the Comptroller General testified before this Committee on a report we had just completed on the procurement profiles of 14 major Army weapon systems. Our analysis showed a clear pattern of production cost increases in those systems in production long enough to deliver units to the field. We believe that the cost growth attendant to beginning production goes beyond cost estimating problems. Consequently, we have begun a DOD-wide review to identify the root causes behind production startup problems.

We are looking at six major weapon systems, two from each service--the Army's Black Hawk helicopter and Copperhead projectile, the Navy's HARM and Tomahawk missiles, and the Air Force's Air-Launched Cruise Missile and F-16 aircraft. We are getting early indications that production startup problems, such as high-labor hours, excessive rework, and longer machining times can, in large part, be traced to the adequacy of production planning efforts while the systems were still in development. It would seem that for systems to have a smoother transition into production, production planning must begin early in engineering development, producibility efforts must go beyond studies into actual hardware, and high-